

made by Mr. Malam, of Keswick, to construct suitable works under conditions which would enable him to guarantee to the shareholders, for a stated period, a dividend of six per cent. on the capital invested in the speculation. A gentleman residing in the vicinity of Egremont, who had recently constructed gas works on a smaller scale for the use of his own manufacturing establishment, also proposes to erect suitable works for the supply of the town on very favourable terms.

Glasgow.—The improvement which the City Hall has lately been undergoing at the hands of the architect and the decorator are now nearly completed. "The most striking alteration in its internal arrangements," says the *Glasgow Gazette*, "is the plan adopted for lighting the Hall. Every one who has spent an evening in it must remember how dismal and cheerless it looked, even when all the gas was lighted; and those who sat in the galleries were always annoyed by the lustres which depended from the ceiling in such a way as to throw a glare on their eyes, while they obstructed the view beyond. This inconvenience is now completely remedied, and by a novel arrangement of the gas, the light is diffused in a brilliant yet soft radiance throughout the building, from nine lustres in the ceiling. Six of these lustres have twenty-seven burners each, and the other three have sixty-three each. The expense of this new arrangement will be 25 per cent. less than that of the old plan, while the amount and quality of the light will be out of sight superior."

Staircases, Gloucester.—This haven, according to the *Ayr Advertiser*, has been greatly improved of late. The stones for building the pier were brought from North Milton, which is about half-a-mile distant. It is of the hardest blue whinstone, some of it very large. The stones for building the breakwater are obtained from rocks at a very short distance from it on the south side of the pier. They are not quite so good as the blue stones mentioned, but many of them weigh several tons. Quarrying stones from this latter place answers a twofold purpose, their removal opening up a road shortening the distance to Port William about a mile.

Dunfermline.—The *Fife Herald* states, that 25l. have been granted, it is believed by the Commissioners of Woods and Forests, for repairing the ruins of the ancient Abbey palace here. The *Herald* speaks of the shabbiness of such a grant for the repair of the ruins of an ancient royal and legislative palace. The walls in many places require filling up and retouching, and these again require to be done in an antiquarian spirit. This cannot be done without artistic skill, and, in consequence, must be at greater expense than common stone and lime repairs. "Whoever has the superintendence of these repairs," adds the *Herald*, "may learn a lesson in the art of agreeable adaptation by looking around the churchyard. The churchyard of Dunfermline, we are almost sure, has not its equal in Scotland, simply for the manner in which it is laid out. The grave ground, as smooth as a gentleman's lawn—the broad gravel walk, without a weed—shrubs and flowers, disposed around in plots, and circles, or semi-circles, or singly, in every unoccupied spot, even adorning the cavities along the root of the old Palace wall—attest the superintending presence of a spirit, as amiable as elegant. Mr. Allan, the warden, by his skillful manner of flooring over the 'place of bones' with a flowery and graceful carpeting, has contrived to make our churchyard not only pleasing, but alluring—the popular resort of young and old—the only public place for recreation that poor Dunfermline has had since the day that the rascality of the old rotten borough eat and drank and swindled her out of her Town Green."

NEW MARBLERS.—We observe, by our advertising columns, that on the 3rd November there is to be a sale at Messrs. Sang, Gogel, and Co.'s, Eaton-lane, South, of marbles, said to be quite new to the London market, being a first importation of the sort from Portugal.

CRITICISM.

The subject of criticism is apt to suffer by the negligent manner of treating it, the language employed being generally such as to deter many from perusing the article. To want beauty and agreeableness of expression here is a great fault. Surely the object with the writer should be to fix the attention of readers by himself writing purely; by not indulging in the caprices of taste against the authority of all rule; and by taking care that the particular merits of any production worth admiring are not lost by an ambiguity of words or incongruity of sentiments? Many critics cause their judgment to be questioned by evidently forgetting the true spirit of criticism, and spoiling a subject that their knowledge might have enabled them to embellish.

The virtues of criticism are as rare as diamonds, but its vices are many and obvious as any commonplaces. To aspire to be a critic in the true sense, is to endeavour after a superiority of mind over other men; to take all that trouble of thought and contemplation of beauty that is necessary to refine it; to perceive the better and more excellent objects with greater acuteness than others; to possess the mental powers more highly—to a fuller extent and more polished than others. These are rare attainments. But many profess these; and among them some who, in their so-called critiques, betray all the faults of criticism (which Bailett has enumerated in the introduction to his "Collected Opinions of the Learned").

We want more of true criticism. To supply this, the standard of literary taste must be raised. We want men devoting themselves to it to be imbued with the spirit of a Schlegel. We want those who descend upon the perfections of any works of art to show that their minds are congenial with the principles on which those noble works were produced. And with all this it is necessary that the critic show even in the style and tone of his criticisms that his mind is steeped in the beauties and delicacy of his native tongue. **FREDERICK LUSH.**

MECHANISM AND ENGINE POWER IN DOMESTIC SERVICE.

A WRITER in the *Spectator*, Mr. Bridges Adams, treating this subject, asks,—

"What are the separate items for which servants are required? 1. Carrying hot and cold water up and down stairs by hand. 2. Carrying coals and dust up and down stairs by hand, and sifting cinders. 3. Making beds. 4. Cleaning shoes. 5. Preparing and cooking food. 6. Ascending the stairs to answer bells, and supply lights. 7. Answering street-door bells. 8. Dusting and sweeping. 9. Waiting at table. 10. Washing floors. 11. Warming and ventilating.

Carrying water up-stairs, both hot and cold, may be performed by engine-power, as well in a dwelling as in a factory, and with far greater neatness than by the present mode. Every apartment and stair-head might have these by a proper system of concealed pipes. Waste water may also pass down pipes, with a run of hot water to cleanse the sinks.

Carrying coals up-stairs should be dispensed with by a machine-hoist to every floor, worked by the engine. The dust should be lowered in the same mode. A minimum of servants' labour once a-day would suffice for this. Gas in many cases may supply the place of fuel.

Making beds is a process needed by the existence of feather and down beds. They are not wholesome. The spring mattresses are not yet perfect, but by better construction, yet to be attained, they will probably be nearly universal. The thumping of feathers may then be dispensed with, and the making the bed will be little more than putting a cloak on or off. We may suppose, also, more improvements in the bedstead.

Cleaning shoes. In numerous businesses, requiring polishing processes, circular brushes are made fast on a shaft revolving at speed like a lathe. But there is another question—Have we obtained absolute perfection in our boots and shoes?

Preparing food is not a drudgery, and it might be prepared without being an unpleasant labour, were kitchens constructed as carefully as laboratories. Coffee, tea, and similar things might be prepared by gas jets alone, with little trouble, and without the aid of servants. Madame Roland could "skim the pot" for her husband's dinner while she prepared his speeches for the tribune or his reports for the state.

Ascending the stairs to answer bells might be dispensed with by internal telegraphs. But increased facilities for people to have all things near them would much diminish this labour; and, moreover, using lifts such as are used for workmen in mills would remove the toil altogether. Gaslights are independent of servants, and not noxious if rightly used.

Warming the dwelling and ventilating is not necessarily a process requiring the lighting of fires and opening windows incessantly, and running up and down stairs to prevent the fire going out. It is essential to maintain a summer warmth in dwellings in addition to open fires. This can be done by supplying pure warmed air from an air-warming establishment, as easily as a supply of gas. It is absurd that every house should manufacture its own warmth, and in most cases do it badly."

NOTES FROM LIMERICK.

THE worthy citizens of Limerick seem to have turned over a new leaf of late. On all sides improvements are going on, or are in contemplation. The new markets will be shortly in progress, the authorities even proposing to carry out Mr. Atkins's design entirely in cut stone, instead of brick with stone dressings. The new markets will comprise a large hall to serve as a corn exchange, music-room, and for public meetings; convenient separate departments for meat, fish, poultry, and vegetable markets, and a large extent of shedding for cattle and agricultural produce, with excellent arrangements for the access of cars, waggons, and droves of cattle from the rear; the architect proposing that the principal front shall be only used as a place of exit. The style of the building is Palladian, and presents a central block, showing a low-pitched gable or pediment to the front, with boldly projecting roof, and a lofty campanile immediately behind; these are flanked by screens, with arched gateways and railings.

The competition for St. John's R. C. chapel, as mentioned recently, is not yet decided on. The requirements of the committee are, that a church to accommodate 5,000 worshippers, without galleries, shall be erected for 5,000l.; in our humble opinion rather a difficult problem. Five or six sets of drawings have been sent in, and none of them give so much as a square foot for each individual; rather close quarters even to stand in, much more for kneeling. We abstain from commenting on the designs until the award is decided: we may, however, state that were there no other consideration to be attended to than the abstract merit of the works, no one could possibly hesitate to decide: this very circumstance may possibly be the cause of the delay. Baths and washhouses for Limerick have been suggested and some steps taken, we believe, to secure a site for them. A model school will be immediately commenced in the outskirts of the new town: it is proposed to comprise industrial, agricultural, and nautical schools. The handsome flax spinning-mill of the Messrs. Russell (a new feature in Munster) is now in course of roofing: the chimney-shaft will be above 160 feet high: we trust it will be the precursor of many similar establishments. A writer in the *Limerick Examiner* calls attention to the great capabilities of this city for a seat of a great cotton manufacture, urging the employment of the immense water power of the Shannon, now roaring idly through the beautiful country surrounding the city. The works at the new floating docks are being prosecuted with vigour, under the superintendence of Mr. Long, C.E.; they are situated on the south bank of the Shannon, immediately below the existing